

UPDATED
PRESS STATEMENT & BACKGROUND FACT SHEET

August 26, 2020

It is a gross injustice to blame my late husband, Arthur Sackler, for the public health crisis surrounding opioids. Arthur was indeed an early pioneer of medical communications. He joined the McAdams medical advertising agency in the early 1940s and has been posthumously credited by the Medical Advertising Hall of Fame with bringing accuracy to medical advertising. "The Medical Tribune," which he founded in 1960, allowed him to speak on all aspects of medicine and society to fellow medical professionals. To suggest that these early marketing achievements became the sinister blueprint for deceptive advertising developed decades after his death is completely false.

Further, over the last few years, "Sackler family," has become synonymous with "evil-doer." But history belies this simplistic condemnation. There is no monolith. Arthur, the eldest of the three Sackler brothers, was never involved in Purdue Pharma, which was founded in 1991 by brothers Mortimer and Raymond. Arthur had nothing to do with Purdue Pharma's flagship therapy, OxyContin, which his brothers brought to market nearly a decade after Arthur's death in 1987.

Neither Arthur nor his heirs were involved with Purdue Pharma or ever profited from Oxycontin. His estate has never been named in a lawsuit. None of his philanthropy derived from the sale of OxyContin. It has astonished me that almost every article or book mentioning Arthur is full of lies about him. I am convinced that Arthur would be horrified to see how OxyContin has been misused – to witness the terrible suffering that has ensued -- and would have been a leadership voice in finding permanent solutions."

This statement may be attributed to Dame Jillian Sackler, widow of Arthur M. Sackler.

Background:

The opioid crisis is the subject of significant public discussion and focus of advocacy groups. We bring to your attention that such discussion concerning Purdue Pharma and OxyContin has incorrectly and misleadingly lumped

together brothers Arthur, Mortimer and Raymond Sackler (and their heirs), under a single “Sackler family” umbrella, when, in fact, Arthur M. Sackler and his heirs have never had a financial interest in the sale of OxyContin nor have they been named in any of the thousands of lawsuits surrounding Purdue Pharma and Oxy/Contin. Misinformation and confusion on this point requires prompt correction and clarification.

Facts:

- Arthur M. Sackler, his widow and heirs, have never financially benefited from the sale of OxyContin.
- Arthur M. Sackler died in 1987, nearly a decade before OxyContin existed or was sold.
- Shortly after his death in 1987, Arthur’s brothers Mortimer and Raymond purchased his one-third option in Purdue Frederick. In 1991 Mortimer and Raymond founded a new company, Purdue Pharma, to market pain medicine.
- Under Mortimer and Raymond’s ownership, Purdue Frederick and Purdue Pharma (owned by Purdue Frederick) brought OxyContin to market in 1996 -- nine years after Arthur’s death and termination of his interest in Purdue.
- None of the charitable donations made by Arthur M. Sackler prior to his death or made by his widow, Jillian Sackler, in his memory were funded from the sale of OxyContin.
- It is misleading and incorrect to refer to the “Sackler family” as a monolithic family unit, when, in fact, the brothers’ and their heirs’ respective wealth and philanthropy derives from different sources. Further, only members of the Raymond and Mortimer branches of the family have been named in litigation.
- Prominent news media, including [*The New York Times*](#), [*The Washington Post*](#), [*TIME*](#), [*Economist*](#), CNN, the *Associated Press*, *Agence France Press*, *The Guardian*, *Huff Post*, *Art News*, etc., have published corrections and clarifications noting the distinction between Arthur M. Sackler and his heirs –

who have had no financial interest whatsoever in the sale of OxyContin – and other branches of the Sackler family.